

Headquarters Military Traffic Management Command

News Release

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Direct booking

Quiet revolution at work for MTMC maritime shipments

For the first time, the Military Traffic Management Command is allowing a customer to book a shipment directly through an ocean carrier Web page.

As a consequence, the time required to book shipments has been slashed.

The first test of the direct booking began today (March 1).

“Fantastic – terrific,” said Tom Hicks, project director.

“This is all about speed and accuracy,” said Hicks. “We are simplifying processes and speeding along the entire Defense Transportation System.”

The key players are CSX Lines and MTMC customer Defense Supply Center Philadelphia, a component of the Defense Logistics Agency.

“We are reducing customer wait time and providing time-definite delivery to customers,” said Curtis Moore, who is coordinating the project in the Distribution Analysis Center.

Eventually, the concept will be expanded to all MTMC customers and ocean carriers. The next carrier to join will probably be Matson and APL. The next customer to join is expected to be Defense Depot San Joaquin, Joaquin, Calif.

“The big, quick benefit is quick input and very fast result,” said Anne Di Sciullo, Traffic Management Specialist, Distribution Section, operations. “We received our booking number immediately. That is the most wonderful thing of it.”

Defense Supply Center Philadelphia conducted the first direct booking on March 1. It asked for three bookings for a total of six shipping containers – to be loaded in Oakland, Calif., for delivery to Guam.

“For three booking actions it took 15 minutes – I can pass this information to the vendor and they can see it is getting into the terminal.”

Di Sciullo’s reaction?

“A lot quicker and a lot smoother ...”

“We have gotten them back the same day but we can not count on it – this is instant. We know it is what we wanted – the vessel we wanted out of the port we wanted.”

Should the program be expanded?

Absolutely – it needs to grow,” said Di Sciullo, a 15-year veteran. “We need actions quicker.”

Defense Supply Center Philadelphia ships approximately 5,000-6,000 containers a year. The bulk of the cargoes are food and some industrial goods.

CSX Lines has been working on the project since October.

“We had to adapt our Web booking system to some of the unique requirements of the military – such as the fact we needed to include a military traffic control number,” said Paul Vicinanza, Director, Government Sales & Marketing, of CSX Lines, Elizabeth, N.J.

“Tests went very well,” said Vicinanza. “We see great advantages in time saved for both ourselves and MTMC and its customers.”

“The booking time has been cut dramatically and there is a lot more accuracy and control,” said Vicinanza. “Now, the booking is created and it is submitted and you have a solid response.”

“A customer is drilling right into our system and has instant access to in-transit visibility. In the past there were delays and filters.”

Future bookings will probably be faster than 15 minutes, said Vicinanza.

“If you do it with regularity – it is two-to-five minutes per booking.”

“It is a quiet revolution at work,” said Frank Galluzzo, Director, Distribution Analysis Center.

“This is all part of the Strategic Distribution Management Initiative which seeks to reduce shipping times – primarily by squeezing time out of the transshipment nodes.”

The direct booking concept takes MTMC out of the “middle-man” role. Currently, the command’s ocean shipments are booked in the Integrated Booking System, MTMC-unique automated software. The bookings are handled by an office in the Deployment Support Command at Fort Eustis, Va.

“Their (carrier) systems are superior to our home-grown systems on our best day,” said Galluzzo.

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